

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A.

Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

Ad. rates—1c per word. 25c per inch (about 30 words), Quarter page \$1.00.
Half page \$1.75, Full page \$3.00. Display adverts., 50c per inch.

Four consecutive insertions for the price of three.

Vol. 12

December 1943

No. 185

1943 Christmas Greetings

FAIR ENOUGH Westbrook Pegler

Taken from Worcester Telegram and
Evening Gazette, 10-25-43

New York, Oct. 25.—In my daily reading of the comic-strip detectives and my occasional quarter-hours with the spies and counter-spies of the radio, I have noticed resemblance to the verboten literature of my youth. Nick Carter, the King Brady's, old and young, and Old Sleuth live again under other names and their resurrection is a puzzling thing because 30-odd years ago when their adventures were appearing weekly in the nickel editions and monthly in the 15-cent sizes which gave you more wordage and at least three desperate predicaments instead of one, this was strictly juvenile entertainment, scored by the elders and by most of the formally forbidden to the young. Parents seized these works when they could find them and put them in the stove, teachers confiscated them on sight and boys were popularly supposed to sneak away to the barn to keep up in their reading, although that was just a way of putting it. Girls, so far as I know, took no interest in such tales.

Beat Edgar Hoover

The parents' theory was that these stories would put criminal ideas into the heads of their young but that could have been just a superstition arising from ignorance for, in justice to the

memory of those fine, fearless men who bravely strode the rough pages of such prints, I wish to say that they were implacable foes of the evildoers who called them into being. Many a time, I personally, read where Nick Carter called some scoundrel a dirty rat or a skunk and all such as that, right to his face, and they were all incorruptable and never failed to get their man. Long before J. Edgar Hoover implored our press to de-glamorize the criminal and to heroize the agents of the law, these authors of my youth were depicting the robber and kidnappers as fiends in human form and the detectives as the sum of all the virtues. I believe young King Brady didn't even smoke cigarettes, an example which, unfortunately, was wasted on many young members of his public, already experimenting with corn silk and lily stems.

The revivals, or reincarnations, of today are not addressed to adolescents but to the adult public and of both sexes, moreover and I am surprised and feel a warm sense of vindication in my own early taste, to observe that the grown-up people of today are eating it up. I might say too, that if I remember correctly, our stories were better, for I do not recall any loose ends or outrageous impositions on probability or the reader's credulity, whereas nowadays in some of the adventure comics and radio dramas there are usually details which are not solved satisfactorily. Sometimes the

author just makes a lot of noise and confusion to cover up flaws in his story and if you are an old dime-novel reader, that is where your early training comes in handy. They can't fool you.

It's All a Trick

I know a girl who writes occasional installments of a radio serial who shows a shocking cynicism in this respect. She is not really a professional writer, but just sits at home, listens to a couple of these dramas of an evening and, when the mood is right, bats out an episode as I believe they are called. She says the whole thing is a trick. You get a heroic young man or woman or a pair of lovers into a terrible jam and in the last minute or two, after the plug for the hangover cure, or the soap or the soup, you bust the public over the head with a surprise and then make your escape under cover of loud music from the band and an almost hysterical spiel from the pitch-man, telling you to be sure to listen tomorrow night at the same time. She says they pay a hundred or a hundred and a quarter and then your rejections are not hard to take because it's just spare-time work anyway.

I guess this revival shows that our parents weren't so smart after all and I hope the satisfaction will assuage, after all these years, the pangs of any whaling in the woodshed as punishment for illicit reading. Not that I ever knew of an authenticated case of such whaling. It was just a popular myth of the day.

—Thanks to Charles Jonas and J. Ambruster for what they sent in.

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Noted as the famous "Diamond Dick"
Richard Jerome Tanner was this hero's name.

Composed August 9th 1943

Presented to my friend

Ralph F. Cummings, August 26, 1943

NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

Just saw in the paper that Charles Woodward's wife had been killed and he was badly hurt Nov. 13th when a drunken driver run them down. Mrs. Woodward was killed instantly. Charles refused to stay in the hospital where he was taken. We all send our sympathy to you Charles in your time of bereavement. God bless her.

Corp. Wm. M. Burns Jr. son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. M. Burns of Rockland, Maine, who has been reported having severe injuries, such as severe head injury, fractured left leg and other body injuries. Seems young Burns was on convoy duty over in England when the accident occurred.

Eli A. Messier was up to see me Sunday Nov. 14th and George French stopped in on his way home to Bloomfield, N. J., from Kezar Falls, Maine, Nov. 15th, where he's been all summer, taking pictures of the state of maine. He spends the winter in Bloomfield.

John T. Benson, owner of animal farm in nearby Hudson, N. H., died Sept. 20th. this year, age 72. At one time he was a representative of the great Carl Hagenbeck and Sons' Circus, also an agent for the Ringling Bros. Circus. Mr. Benson left a trained elephant by will to the Boston Zoo.

That rarity—the Bull Moose—was seen in Saundersville, Fisherville, and other towns around, which have seen the rarity in the Massachusetts hills and dales. Seems he and a lot of deer escaped from Roger Williams Park, down in Connecticut. He was seen up

here Sept. 20th, this year.

W. L. (Bill) Montague, 1156 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, Conn., wants a program and route book, if one was issued, of the 1897 "Adam Forepaugh—Sells Bros. United Shows" (circus). Write me if you have one.

P. T. Barnum first moved his circus by train in 1872. Before that he used 600 horses to take the circus from town to town, then he purchased 65 railway cars painted in the most brilliant of colors.

The first circus poster to appear in the U. S. A. came out on June 27th, 1797, at Providence, R. I. We may have more to say about this later.

Carl Linville says when the Roundup comes in he goes off and sits down in a quiet place, then as he reads on, it brings him back to his boyhood days of long ago, which were heaps better than these days of rush and turmoil. He says he gets a lot of thrill and satisfaction out of the old 5c thrillers, too.

L. D. Webster says the Army and Navy Weeklies had 33 nos., while the Half Holiday had 28 nos. He believes No. 67 dated May 2, 1891, was the last no. of the Boys Holiday. Mr. Webster has a lot of novels for sale, write for lists.

Ye editor wishes the titles and authors of N. Y. Detective Library nos. 794, 795, 796, 797, 800.

Have you seen the Ellery Queen Mystery magazine for November 1943. There is "A Miniature Dime Novel" in it, called "The Topaz Cuff-Button," taken from New York Detective Library No. 272, pub. by Frank Tousey, Feb. 18th, 1888. This magazine sells for 25c per copy, and is the same size as Readers Digest. Has red covers and is very interesting. Address Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

Dr. Albert Johannsen, 2203 W. 11th St., Chicago 43, Ill., would like to hear from any one knowing anything about "Heart and Hand," a weekly journal published in Chicago between 1888 and 1893, and perhaps a few years longer.

John Mederarts third installment on The Aldine Publishing Co., in "Collectors Miscellany," is very interesting. If any one wishes the 1st, 2nd and 3rd installments of this fine article, write to J. A. Birkbeck, his ad is in this magazine.

Charles Duprez says he paid \$3.00

for the reprint of No. 1 of Jesse James Stories out in New York. It was republished in Dec. 1938 to go with the moving picture of Tyrone Power as Jesse James. They must have seen Charlie coming.

Washington Township Philosopher! ULYSSES GRANT FIGLEY, (contributor to Bryan Press since 1908). U. G. Figley was born on a Tiffin township farm on a very stormy night, Nov. 18, 1864. His folks came from Crawford and Richland counties in the early 1840's. His paternal ancestors were from Switzerland, 1733, and after added five other European nationalities. His maternal ancestors were English Pilgrims, which after added from Holland and Ireland. He learned his letters on his grandmother's knee when he was about three years old, while she was reading the Bible, and read it through himself before he was twelve (12) and a few times since. Attended district schools. Attended Valparaiso University, 1885-7, wrote college news for two local papers, and assisted on Literary societies' "papers," member of Union Literary Society. Reported for two Defiance dailies. Began corresponding to newspapers in Feb. 1878, been regular Washington correspondent Bryan Press since May 1908. Is an ex-school teacher. Was mayor of Nevada in 1898. Was Justice of the Peace about 20 years. Wrote a lot for publication, a lot of poetry, some not printed, a few books, one published and out of print. Has about 800 books, some very old and odd, gave away about 200 besides, and about 50 more were loaned and "kept," and some stolen. Oldest book is a Latin one on excommunication, printed in 1610. Used to mix and bake good bread. Has broken in cows to be milked. Has a red-heads temper. Has a big sense of humor. Motto is "Keep Smiling." As he has no back teeth he chews his Brown Mule or Spark Plug with his gums. Has been his own housekeeper for over 15 years. His son is school superintendent at Gloucester. (also a member of H. H. Bro. #66) Athens county. Daughter is a farmer's wife near Sand Creek, Mich. There are four grand-children, one great-grandchild. Except for lameness, the Old Man is in a pretty fair condition, thank you. P. S. He has a growth of whiskers that grew since Jan. 1st. Editors Note: The above sketch of his life was prepared as is by Mr. Figley.

He lives alone in his home five miles southwest of Bryan, surrounded by his remarkable collection of books and antiques, some dating back 300 years. He has always been a wide reader and keeps in touch with the present by radio and telephone, but leaves unexplained how he knows everyone's middle name. He is H. H. Bro. member No. 65. Most of this from the Bryan Press, April 16th, 1942. Mr. Figley will have a birthday Nov. 18th, 1943, and many, many, more of them, we hope.

Ye editor Cummings received the surprise of his life a few weeks ago

when he received by express Nos. 1 to 177 inclusive of Pluck and Luck from one of the members of H. H. B. which the sender wishes him to accept with his compliments and in partial payment for what he has done to keep alive interest in our old "Heroes." Ye editor was so surprised and still is, that he seems to be in a trance, and hardly knows how to thank the most generous person from which he received this wonderful lot, all in fine A1 condition, and a wonderful lot, of which ye editor Cummings is making a collection of them. Simply wonderful, he calls it.

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42. John T. McIntyre, 214 So. 42nd St., Phila., Pa.
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 105. Wm. W. Giles (Beaver Bill), 1405 7th Ave., Rock Island, Ill. (Honorary Member)

BALLADE OF DEAD DIME NOVELS

(Clipped from College Humor by Andy Hanes, Jr.)

I

Gone are the novels we bought for a dime,
 Yellow-backed books that the most of us read,
 Stories of slaughter, of murder and crime,
 Harrowing tales we devoured—(instead
 Of undressing correctly and going to bed),
 Deed-daring villains of doubled-dyed hue,
 Cold-hearted heroes—where now are they fled?
 Where are the paper-backed novels I knew?

II

I loved Deadwood Dick in the day of his prime,
 Joyful I was at the blood that he shed,
 Sorrowed to see him cut down 'fore his time—
 Sorrowed to see him get—knocked on the head.
 By preacher and parent and pedagogue sped
 To the land where Dime Novel Adventures are true.
 But no one can know where that country is spread—
 Where are the paper-backed novels I knew?

III

Passed though he is, persistently I'm
 Wondering where is Nick Carter, the Dread
 Prince of the Ferrets, Detective Sublime.
 (Probably now he is raising Old Ned
 In the place that will never freeze over, 'tis said.)
 Howe'er that may be, I've a question in view.
 Old readers who liked 'em all gory and red,
 Where are the paper-backed novels I knew?

Envoy

Beadle, behold how your glory is dead.
 Gone is your desperate, dangerous crew.
 Ask of the strap that once hung in the shed—
 Where are the paper-backed novels I knew?

—California Pelican.

Bill Gander's, The Story Paper Collector can't be beat for articles and newsy items about the English Bloods and Boys Magazines. No. 14 is just out, 20 pages, Oct. to Dec. 1943, has "Artists of the Golden Era" by John Medcraft, "There was Magic in Their Names" by Herbert Leckenby and others, all very interesting, BUT what is the matter with The Collectors Miscellany that's published up in Bury Scotland? News comes to us thru the Story Paper Collector, that Matthew Hunter, a collector of old boys papers has passed to the great beyond. It is said that he had the complete set of Ching Ching's Own, and a valuable set it is and a rarity too. Mr. Hunter died January 25th 1943,

up in Scotland. We know he has gone to the isle of somewhere. God have mercy on his soul.

Chicago's most distinguished collector of dime novels is Dr. Albert Johannsen professor emeritus of the department of petrology at the University of Chicago. He has some 5,000 in his collection, or did several years ago, beginning with "Malaska," by Mrs. Ann Stevens, published in 1860, an original edition of which is, by the way, included in the sale for \$175. Most of them are priced at \$1.50. Others in Dr. Johannsen's collection were all the Deadwood Dick stories, books in the Half Dime Library, and hundreds of others.

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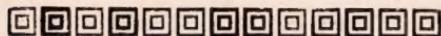
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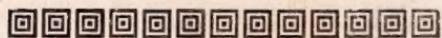
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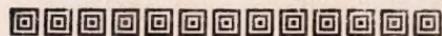
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